

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 2 are sought to be amended. Claims 1-27 and 37 are pending in the application, with 1 and 37 being the independent claims. No new matter has been entered by any amendments.

Based on the above amendment and following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Objection to the Claims

The Examiner objected to the claim 1 as lacking antecedent basis for "second gate valve." Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the objection in view of the amendment above.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-27 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,376,212 to Saiki ("Saiki"). Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections.

Claims 1 and 37 recite at least a lithography patterning chamber.

Saiki teaches only of processing chambers 41 and 42 and no lithography patterning chamber, in contrast to assertions by the Examiner that chamber 41 is a lithography patterning chamber. Throughout the specification Saiki refers to chambers 41 and 42 as performing reduced pressure processing functions: "A reduced-pressure processing apparatus is known which is designed to perform etching, ashing, film-forming and the like," (col. 1, lines 12-14), "In each of the processing chambers 41 and 42, various processes, such as etching, ashing, and film-forming, can be performed on a wafer W in a desired gas atmosphere under a reduced pressure," (col. 4, lines 51-54), "In the first processing chamber 41, a reduced pressure process, e.g., etching...The second chamber 42...a reduced pressure process, e.g., ashing," (col. 6, lines 38-59), "For

example, a high-power etching may be performed on wafer W in the first processing chamber 41, and low-power etching may be performed on wafer W in the second processing chamber 42,” (col. 8, lines 65-69), and “a first passivation film is formed...in...chamber 41...and a second passivation film is formed...in the second processing chamber 42,” (col. 11, lines 38-42).

All operations performed in Saiki’s chambers 41 and 42 are either pre or post patterning type operations. Saiki does not teach or suggest using chambers 41 or 42 for patterning of a wafer (i.e., lithography patterning). “Etching” of a photoresist layer, for example, is performed after an image has been patterned. Moreover, “film-forming” is done, for example, to create a photoresist layer (film) on a wafer prior to patterning. Saiki provides no motivation for using processing chambers 41 and/or 42 to perform patterning as defined and claimed by Applicants.

More simply, Saiki does not teach or suggest using the reduced pressure processing apparatus in a lithography tool and/or performing patterning, imaging, exposure, lithography, or the like. Saiki merely teaches of performing processing steps to a work piece in a controlled environment.

Therefore, Saiki neither teaches or suggests a lithography patterning chamber as recited in claims 1 and 37. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejections. Claims 2-27 should also be found allowable, at least based on their dependencies to claim 1.

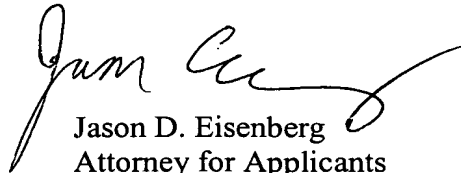
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason D. Eisenberg", written over the printed name.

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